

To Whom It May Concern:

North Carolina's Constitution provides that every child in our state must be guaranteed the right to a sound basic education. As business leaders, we are concerned that the proposed budget being presented by the General Assembly compromises the state's ability to fulfill that constitutional mandate.

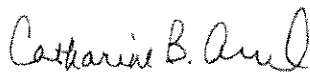
We know the importance of public education to business and economic success. The traditionally high quality of North Carolina's workforce is one of the main reasons our businesses have chosen to locate or expand in this state. The quality of that workforce depends fundamentally on the quality of the state's pre-school, K-12, community college and university systems.

In the state's public school system, major cuts are being forced down to local school districts. The fact that many of the reductions come in the form of "flex cuts" does nothing to change their impact – especially in a state like North Carolina where the school age population is growing, not declining. If these changes become law, they will lead to lost jobs in the classroom and larger class sizes, and North Carolina would drop near last in the nation in per pupil spending.

In our community college and university systems – which have long been the envy of other states – funding cuts will force the elimination of core programs and faculty and will create longer waiting lists for critical workforce training programs. Universities and community colleges would lose an additional \$305 million on top of previously recommended reductions. The quality of the training and education students in these programs receive will suffer, leaving businesses to bear greater costs for remedial and basic skills training.

North Carolina built its reputation as a state of modest means that wisely invested its scarce resources in its most precious asset – its human capital. It built a public education system that in many respects is a model for the nation and the world and it enshrined its commitment to that system in its Constitution.

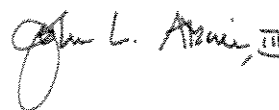
We believe strongly North Carolina can make a better and wiser investment in its education system than that which has been presented. We urge policy makers to work together to craft a spending plan that honors North Carolina's legacy of investing in human capital and continues to provide the businesses of this state the finest workforce the nation has to offer.



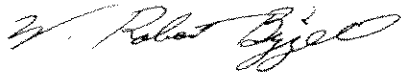
Catherine B. Arrowood
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Speideh Asefria
President/Founder
Sepi Engineering



John Atkins
Chairman/CEO



Robert Bizzell
President and Founder
Realo Discount Drug Stores, Inc.



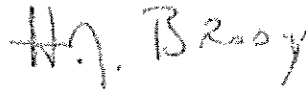
John M. Blackburn
President
Eseeola Lodge



Patty Briguglio
President
MMI Public Relations



David Brody
Owner
Brody Associates



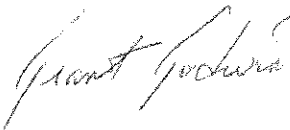
H. J. Brody
Manager
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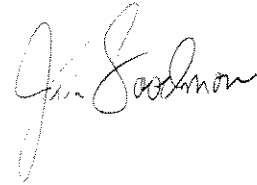
James D. Chavis
General Manager & Owner
Holiday Inn Express



Dr. Donald deBethizy
CEO/President
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Grant Godwin
Managing Partner
Polaris Associates LLC



Jim Goodman
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President & CEO
The Hamner Institutes for Health
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Joseph B. Hanks
VP & General Counsel
Evergreen Packaging



Phil Hodges
President & CEO
Metrics, Inc.



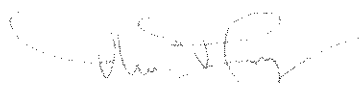
Honorable Robert Jordan
President of Jordan Lumber
Former Lt. Governor of NC



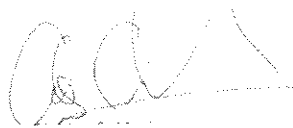
Honorable Allen Joines
Chairman
North Carolina Economic
Development Board



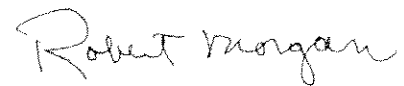
Ron J. Leeper
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R.J. Leeper Construction,
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Thomas Looney
Vice President/ General Manager
Lenovo



Honorable Charles C. Meeker
Mayor of Raleigh



Honorable Robert B. Morgan
Former U.S. Senator
Former NC Attorney General



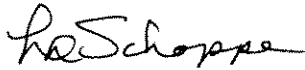
Mack Pearsall
CEO
PVC, Inc



Simon Rich
Private Investor, Farmer and
Educator



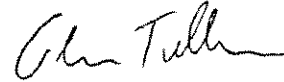
Simon Rich III
NC General Manager of
Stevens Towing Co. Inc.



Laura A. Schoppe
Fuentek, LLC



Durwood Stephenson
Founder & President
SGC Design Build



Glen Tullman
CEO
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